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ABSTRACT

An investigation of the relationships between form and comprehension of written materials by eleventh grade students is reported in this paper. Students were asked to manipulate two variables of spacing and punctuation in a consistently administered and marked exercise. Students also completed a comprehension test on the exercise they had just finished. It was hypothesized that comprehension would vary directly with students' capability of imposing form on the selection and that hypothesis was supported. Possible implications of these results are discussed. Graphs of results and the test forms are included. (TO)

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Parameters of Syntax and Comprehension: A Test of Form--Meaning Relationships for Secondary School Students

A paper presented by Paul Beam, Department of English, University of Waterloo on Wednesday, August 22nd, 1973 to the Sixth Annual Conference of the Canadian Council, Teachers of English, and the National Council, Teachers of English, Vancouver, British Columbia.

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Ladies and Gentlemen:

May I clarify an important point at the outset of this paper? At the time when I was asked by the conference committee for a title and resumé of my work, I noted that my subject base lay among grade eleven students. I assume that I did not elaborate in enough detail that this particular enquiry is designed to investigate especially relationships between form and comprehension at most levels of instruction. I am most interested in carrying the present work into two versions which will provide simple and effective assessments of student language capabilities in grades seven and eight and in grades twelve and thirteen. So for our purposes this afternoon, I will illustrate my work with examples from grade eleven, but I would ask you to consider the design in a wider context of evaluation with applications on both sides of the secondary school years.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

I am aware, from experience, of the close relationships between control of form and control of ideas in my own and my students' work. It is a common experience for teachers that neat, formally correct writing more often reveals consistent, accurate meaning than does less formally controlled expression. My study is an attempt to test a portion of this premise by having students manipulate two variables of spacing and punctuation in a consistently administered and marked exercise (F D through Al of your sample) which is then checked by a comprehension test (C A through Cans-2). My suspicion at the outset of our work was that comprehension varied directly as a student was capable of imposing form on the selection

coded D in the appendix. A student who was capable of reconstructing five correctly punctuated quatrains as in F A probably understood much more than a student who could not recognize five sentences.

I tested prototypes of this exercise on Honours and General students in second and subsequent years of an English programme before selecting some five hundred and fifty students--all from grade eleven and all from two schools in the Waterloo County Board--as my base for a major study. Grade eleven students offered several advantages. To begin the process of validating such a study, I was obliged to offer some established form of testing--a recognized I.Q. test, in this case the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Grades 10 - 12. Surve y, Form 2 - Comprehension. I early saw that I would probably have to retest my group at least once, and the final year of grade twelve of Ontario's four-year programme would offer only one opportunity. In addition, after grade eleven the chances of my subject's being familiar with the material increase greatly and most linguists believe that vocabulary distinctions--important in this work--become very difficult to measure beyond this point.

At the outset I sought to keep my sample group as close as possible to the high-school-university transition as I could. Hence, grade eleven became my optimum choice and I believe I have been able to retain most of the advantages I originally sought. My plans for the immediate future involve developing a series of such tests, keeping in mind levels of vocabulary and techniques of form, which will enable a school or department

to test student abilities from grades seven through university entrance. Modifications of the salient features of the exercise in front of you allow for accurate, inter-related testing on this basic model.

Many of you will recognize the exercise as a version of Thomas Hardy's "Afterwards." Small changes have been made in vocabulary,[1] but the remaining alterations consist merely of eliminating the formal devices of punctuation (which include syntactical capitals) and spacing in stanzas or paragraphs, and thereby reducing the passage to a continuous linear expression, the "meaning" of which has to be re-imposed by whatever devices of grammar, phrasing and sub-vocal reading a student can bring to the task. These abilities, in effect, are what I am testing as factors in comprehension. At this point in the description, permit me an aside. My point in the project was to develop a test which required a construction on the part of the subject, as opposed to a substitution which so many reading tests require. My objections to patterns like Cloze reading or the Carver-Darby tests, for example, are that they oblige the subject to alter (or they alter for him) the basic content of the passage.

It seems sufficient here to say that this always places a severe limitation on what the researcher can know and say about the processes by which an answer was derived and it necessarily distorts the test

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[1] As, for instance, the substitution of the metrically equivilent "backgate" for "postern." Pre-testing on grade ten and twelve students showed the pattern of crossing out the "n" on the latter word. This did not allow for semantic reading of the sentence, but a "poster" was at least an experienced object.

away from normal reading function and patterns of thought. I offer the device of having each student work in both parts of the test with the same basic data--the version you see in front of you--and constructing a tighter meaning out of his development of form[2] as one of the two major advantages of this method. The second advantage is that, by being able to compare his work in form against his results in comprehension in the second phase of the test, some of which results are dependent on his perception of grammatic relationships, he can quickly come to see direct connections between "how" he sees meaning and the reasons why he "knows" certain answers. But here I anticipate later developments.

Students in our sample received one of D, C or B versions on an in-class distribution of D-1, C-2, B-3, D-4, etc. They were instructed to make no alterations in form--either in groups of words or within individual words, but rather to add whatever punctuation and spacing would enhance a reader's comprehension of the passage. I stressed (and stress) that word "passage" because at no point in the first test were the participants encouraged to think of the work as a piece of poetry. My only interest in it as such is that it permits several features of form which indicate and enhance meaning, as one quickly sees in version A, where the sentence units are not only of equal length but where one sees most clearly that the units share a remarkable series of grammatic devices, including future tenses, questions, a conjectured third person and the possibility of transferred direct speech. No other possible form of this passage demonstrates these features so clearly.

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[2] without having to alter syntax or vocabulary, but rather with having to impose sequential meaning on it.

The students were provided with one of the three versions, a brief list of instructions, and a piece of lined paper on which they were asked to transcribe the passage, incorporating all features of spacing and punctuation which they deemed requisite. They were advised to spend the first ten minutes of the half hour in reading over the printed version and make any marks on it which might help them in the reconstruction of the exercise. They were advised after ten minutes that they should begin transcription. The time requirements were pre-tested and found to be adequate for grade eleven students. All facets of this project were designed to eliminate power--the use of a time factor as a variable--and students were told this at the outset. They were informed also that this work would not be a factor in their course grades and would not appear in their records. All testing other than the Gates-MacGinity Comprehension test--our validity measure--was done in students' regular classrooms during English classes through all periods of the day. Our results take into account the normal shifts of motivation and ability which a day reflects, and we tested both four and five-year students from the two schools in all periods of the day.

To ensure no confounds arising from incomplete recall, we administered the second half--the comprehension phase--of the test in the same time period one week after the test for form. At that point each student's work--both his original test page and his transcription--was returned to him and he had the benefit of the best of his own work to complete the questions of the three phases of the comprehension exercise. (labelled

CA, B+C). Students had not been advised about, and could not anticipate, the two parts of the test beyond knowing from acquaintances who received the work early in the day that a particular test was being administered. We did not discuss our work during testing periods, returning only after phase two to counsel particular students with the prior consent of their teachers. Teachers were requested to refrain from discussing what they knew of our work, and the natures of the two tests leave little room for plagiarizing or copying. In matters of marking, methods were standardized among three markers to 100% on all questions and we believe the test, in both phases, to be "objective".

The two phases of our testing interrelate at the level of the material in the three versions in that all questions on the comprehension test are amenable to solution, either directly by quotation, or by extension of information supplied there, as in section A, question one, the correct answer to which can be demonstrated by the interrogative "will" of the first sentence of the passage. I will deal with the possibility of the comprehension test being only another version of the form test presently; suffice it to say here that we were aware of such a possiblity at the outset and have tried to avoid devising merely two duplicating tests for the same funtion.

In assessing a student's achievement on the form test, we were obliged to consider a third factor along with punctuation and spacing. Ten rhymes are possible in an ABAB, CDCD sequence and it is the presence of this pattern, along with the other two factors, which indicates achievement at the maximum level of form of which version A is a subset. We were most careful during the form testing to refrain from any hints

that rhyme might be present, in the same way that we avoided all references to poetry. The rhyme scheme is very subtle and almost non-functioning in that the themes of the work are not indicated by, or elaborated on, in the rhyme sequences. We believe that the only indication for subjects that they may be working with poetry lies in the density and complexity of the imagery, as the first line indicates. Many students believed they were working with poetry; most of these were nonetheless unable to construct a significant pattern of rhyme and most of these saw no thematic unity between the syntax of five equal and repetitive speech units and the quatrains. It was to be able to make this elaboration of distinctions between meaningful and "decorative" forms that we selected a piece of poetry for our first example.

This particular passage, in the repetition of devices in each of its five units, gives us two important advantages. It permits us to examine closely the point where students can move from discriminating features like vocabulary and sequence in the linear reading of the passage to where they are capable of considering implications involved with euphemisms and the conjectural senses of the major verbs. While both linear discrimination and the nuances of implication fall into the larger category of comprehension, the ability to separate the two seems, to our minds, to be an important advantage in testing at this level.[3]

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[3]Students for whom English is a second language score very high in the B section of our comprehensive test for instance while often failing sections A and C. In the form test they are able to discriminate sentences by syntax but they are seldom able to determine that they are interrogative or that the direct speech applies to a third party.

In effect, we believe we are differentiating, through several significant degrees, the ability of subjects to deal with the sophisticated, often figurative, language which marks off adult thought from the more literal and linearly founded expressions of children. This is a major point and I will be pleased to elaborate on it in discussion.

At the outset, in our grading of the form test we were obliged to adopt two important premises. The first is that each of the four versions of the passage is merely a subset of its category--that acceptable variations, within punctuation especially, do occur. For instance, it is possible to treat all but one of the speeches attributed to other people, not as direct speech, but as conjecture, and no necessary impairment of comprehension results.[4] In like manner, Hardy's semicolon in stanza three can be equally (possibly even more accurately) represented by a comma. And in the possible juncture of stanzas four and five by the word "and," spacing and punctuation can be altered with little or no significant change in semantic meaning. All of this our marking system had to allow for, and the result led to our second premise. We know from studies in the field, like D.L. Hintzman's "Classifications and aural coding in short term memory,"[5] that sub-vocalization--the oral rendering of written material prior to cortical transfer--takes on increasing importance as we "concentrate" on a difficult reading task.

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[4]The separation of the speech from the verb "say" in stanza five makes direct speech more necessary than in stanzas one and three where we can presume an implied "that"

[5]D.L. Hintzman, "Classification and Aural Coding. . . " Psychonomic Science, 1965. 161-2.

What we determined was that all punctuation present in this passage could be represented by a combination of stressed pauses in conjunction with accented syllables. Capitalization represents simultaneously the heavy stress of the opening of a sentence and a modification in letter design to catch the reader's eye to indicate an act of speech. In places where several punctuation marks might be equally applicable, in the absence of any direction to the reader, we accept all possible marks and combinations. This is represented by appendix A1. Any punctuation device falling within the categories of numbers below a particular word was counted as correct.

A second discovery was that not every punctuation device provided by the author was significant. Of some twenty commas for instance, only four are necessary to meet the standard of significant punctuation as "any device whose absence would cause ambiguity in linear reading."

While the punctuation scheme appears complicated, it represents a reconstruction of the passage which permits possible alternatives to Hardy's original. Subtle changes in theme occur if, for instance, the passage lacks quotation marks; the "sense" of isolation is lessened while the speaker's introspection is enhanced by emphasizing his thought processes over the conjectured words of the third parties. Both readings are possible and "correct" by the terms of the exercise and, hence, worthy of full marks.

We have been unable to discover sentence structures alternative to the five units of version A which meet our criterion of maximum comprehension,

though alternatives do exist at the level of syntax. A comma after "flaps" in line two of version D permits a reading of "flaps" as a noun and "leaves" as a verb. The sentence makes little linear sense and bears no relation in comprehension to the rest of the passage, but it is possible syntactically. None of our over five hundred subjects has discovered an acceptable alternative form to Hardy's version, so we feel confident in assuming that our marking scheme is inclusive and correct for all possible reconstructions of the passage.

We made no judgements at the outset between poetic and prose versions and it is evident that version C is as amenable to linear reading as is version A. However, in our results, students who were given version D and who managed to both space and punctuate it scored, on an average, sixteen points on the graph sheet above students who who were only able to punctuate it. Those who saw significant spacing and rhyme scored ten points higher on an average than those who merely saw the passage as a piece of prose. These figures are even more dramatic for students working from section C (see the line graph) where the differences are twenty-two and twenty-eight respectively for SP (spacing and punctuation) and RP (rhyme and punctuation) over the presence of P (punctuation) in isolation. B version, the spaced-unpunctuated version, shows the most startling rise of all from 147.44 as an average on the comprehension test for those who failed to improve their version to an average of 195.71 for those who correctly punctuated theirs.

Only a few students writing each of versions D, C and B (less than

five in any category) achieved acceptable RSP (rhyme, spacing and punctuation) but those students who did achieved the highest means for scores on the comprehension test. We do not include the figures on the graphs because they do not figure significantly in t-measures.

While these results bear out our premise and demonstrate consistently the close relationships between the two connected ways of "seeing" the passage, I must reiterate that one facet of my test is probably closely related to I.Q. measure, and certainly some parts of the comprehension test assess essentially the same ability as the formal transcription does. I believe I have demonstrated, however, that achievement in the comprehension section of the test is statistically similar in form-related and form-distinct questions. About the matter of I.Q. dependence, I can reply only that until I am shown any test in reading comprehension which is not I.Q.-related, this one still enjoys the advantages of being able to relate the factors of form and comprehension from which the I.Q. measure is derived, as tests like the Gates-MacGinity cannot. As well, it enjoys a significant valididty in relation to Gates-MacGinity at the .5 level of correlation and relates more closely to course grades (.49 as opposed to .41) than the latter.

Our categories of P- through RSP are sequential in that they indicate developing form but the areas of S and P have close numerical relations about which we can presently only theorize. P- is the condition at which a transcribed paper contains five or more significant punctuation errors. Students "achieve" it through failure to correctly

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determine the major sentence units or thier interrogative-assertive function. The number five is not arbitrarily selected. Statistically at the level of comprehension a large gap appears between those students who commit five or more errors and those with four or fewer. This is explainable in part by the five units of the passage. A correct assessment of these assures a subject of most of the significant punctuation, and since only three of the units are interrogative, failure to identify them by a question mark results in a total of less than five errors. Large numbers of students fell into the P-Category which indicated that our test is closer to the upper limits of the abilities of many grade-eleven students,[6] but the pattern of large numbers of four-year students in this category also showed that we are very close to the levels of achievement of these students as tested by Gates-MacGinity. In effect, this test accurately reflects the system within which these people study and their normal low level of performance.

In matters of punctuation we make a double distinction of extraneous and cognitive errors. Cognitive are those errors of mistaking a question-mark for a period, for example: extraneous are those which result from breaking one correct sentence into two incorrect ones. We separate the two kinds of error to further define student problems but both count equally in placing a paper in the P- category.

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[6]It also indicated the large gap which exists between the four and five year programmes. Classes of grade 10 five-year students scored significantly higher in pre-testing on both phases of our study than did four-year elevens and even four-year twelves. This is interesting for educators but simply provides this study with more statistics problems.

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The category R is reserved for transcriptions which demonstrate neither adequate spacing nor punctuation. Our hypothetical candidate--not one in five hundred fitted it--is an idiot-savant with an ear for subtle rhyme and no sense of grammar or syntax.

"S" indicates spacing adequate to demonstrate to subject and marker the subject's awareness of five equal and separate units (or four by the "and" conjunction of stanza five). In cases where students demonstrated an emerging awareness of spacing by separating out stanzas four and five, we marked by a conservative standard and did not award them the category in order to avoid the charge of subjective judgements.

"P" indicates a reconstruction at the level of prose of not more than four errors in significant punctuation, and it represents the lowest level of formal achievement from which a perfect score in comprehension can be derived. Differences between comprehension scores achieved by subjects at this level and those of subjects who gained more complex levels of form are, to our minds, explainable only in terms of the connected variables of form and comprehension.

The subsequent four categories are combinations of the three possibilities of rhyme, spacing and punctuation. We categorize for R if rhyme appears in over half the possible combinations and is sustained--that is, if it does not disappear after stanza three for instance--and if it is not the result of a transcription which uses a single line for each word, to offer an extreme example.

As we leave this part of the test, let me stress again that each of the versions, D through A, is only a subset of possible versions in that

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category. In terms of spacing we recognize only one other correct version, that of the combined fourth and fifth stanzas, while in punctuation probably over a hundred permutations of significant punctuation are possible. A transcription achieving RSP will, however, closely resemble version A in the appendix, and when we find it, we invariably discover a subject with those faculties which assure high achievement on the comprehension test.

Our study was greatly complicated by the decision to administer the D, C and B versions of this test but it seemed to us imperative at the outset to obtain as clear an understanding as we could of the relative influence of the three variables with which we were working. We now know numerically the importance of each of spacing and punctuation. (Our method, of course, allows for regression and, of course, some subjects availed themselves of it wherever possible, reducing B and C to functional D or of some semblance of the other letter).

What the efforts in accounting for B and C have shown is that spacing and punctuation appear to enhance comprehension independant of each other,[7] and when they occur together they confirm a reader's impressions of the passage. An obvious example is sentence closure where punctuation and spacing both show not only a break in subject matter but also a new point of comparison between what precedes and what follows that break.

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[7]Our categories of S and P and RS and RP have only statistical validity. Obviously different readers will "see" more in one function than the other, depending on their training, and a separation by importance seems pedantic.

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The comprehension test was designed initially merely as a method of measuring the results of the form test. It requires a half hour to administer and we believe that it provides a valuable adjunct to the transcription piece, especially if the instructor plans to discuss relationships between form and meaning and uses this work as a teaching device. Students can see why their answers on content are dependent on their concepts of form, by any analysis of the ways of obtaining correct answers to sections A and C of the comprehension test.

From the outset we designed three very common forms of test--multiple choice, term selection, and a version of the essay question which required for answers only direct quotations from the source passage. We took care to ensure an even distribution of answers throughout the original passage in each section of the comprehension test. Further, we placed randomly throughout each section certain questions which are punctuation dependent. The asterisks on the answer sheets (C A through C) indicate these. In section A, for instance, we believe that questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8 require a clear conception of the passage's grammatical structure to be correctly answered. By establishing a close correlation between students' raw scores (composed of the total marks within each section) and their punctuation-dependent scores, we feel we can argue that the comprehension test is related to a student's concept of form; that it tests his understanding of the theme and content of the passage as well. In no cases did the raw and punctuation-dependent scores vary by more than 5% in any level or section of students.

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Section B of the comprehension test is most closely related to word identification and vocabulary, and we regard it as primarily a test of a student's ability to identify individual words and phrases. It is the farthest removed from any function of form, and we see that students who score highly in it and poorly in sections A and C will almost invariably do poorly in the form phase of the test. These people are often difficult to identify in classes because they may possess sufficient rudimentary skills in language to write adequate work. Yet their inability to manipulate form must necessarily impair their comprehension function, and as soon as they are asked to demonstrate skills beyond rote learning and the level of individual words, they perform poorly. Most people who study English as a second language in their teens will conform to this pattern. The two parts of this exercise locate and define such students and I believe that it is often possible to demonstrate from their transcription and their answers the nature of their difficulty.

Sections A and C we believed from the outset were complementary, and both test directly into the areas of comprehension derived from syntactic meaning. Only in a statistical analysis of the results did it become evident how closely the two were related to each other and to the first part of the test. When we tested each section against the comprehension function of the Gates-MacGinity test, we discovered a pleasingly high degree of correlation--both individually at the level of .50. Section B, on the other hand, was even higher, at .74. And

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our test related at the level of .62 overall. What interested us most was the similarity of correlation between A and C and the further indication of what the Gaites-MacGinity test for comprehension was actually doing. We believe that questions in A and C are more revealing of the results of students' abilities to analyse written work. Such a conclusion indicates that one of our measures may be quite I.Q. dependent, but since intelligence is an important factor in linguistic assimilation and analysis, the results seem appropriate.

Analysis of variants, as far as we have applied the formula, bears out very strong relationships between A and C despite their dissimlarities in format. We intend now to develop a machine-markable extended examination on the pattern of exercise A, since C appears to be redundant.

In section A we decided to offer partial marks for choices which involved some degree of understanding. The correct answer to question 1, for instance, is "may take place" when we realize that the correct sentence closure is a question mark. It is highly probable that some readers will fail to see this even after they have correctly determined the grammatical unit, and the phrase "will take place" shows a significantly more correct assessment than either of the demonstrably incorrect answers of "have taken place" and "are taking place."

The frequency of repetition of devices like euphemism and grammatical structures like future interrogatives provides the possibility of some five to twelve correct answers to several of the questions in C and we

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thus avoid the situation of testing for single examples in isolation. A student has several possible choices and the frequency of those choices is more apparent the more he is aware of the five-part structure. Other relationships between the form test and the comprehension test become apparent by the reader actually completing the latter from form test D.

I have familiarized you with our methods of administration and marking and I'd like to conclude my remarks with a summary of some of the features which we'd expected to find and some which surprised us. By an application of t tests we determined levels of significance between most of the categories in our matrix of test passage versions by the eight categories of possible transcription, P-through RSP. Statistically, at least, we can conclude that our work is measuring significant distinctions. We are presently engaged in an analysis of variants within the patterns of right and wrong answers in the comprehension exercise to relate the results to specific errors in the form test. This should give us the degree to which one test replicates the other, as well as the ways in which they independantly support each other as measures of comprehension.

Our most pleasant surprise was the continuity through the eight categories of transcription and the three versions of the passage of awareness of form and achievement in comprehension. Intuition and teaching experience need not be invoked over common sense in order to say that students who can't tell where sentences begin and end will also do poorly when asked what those sentences say and at the extremes of

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P- and RSP the distinctions in student ability are obvious. What was pleasing for us was the consistency of the three graphs through the intermediate categories. Since P (of which version C is a subset) contains all the information requisite to obtaining a perfect mark of 300 on the comprehension test, why should students who correctly recognize spacing and punctuation consistently score higher, and why should students who achieve rhyme, spacing and comprehension score highest of all? The only variables are rhyme, spacing and punctuation. Our conclusion is that form and comprehension are closely related--that manipulation of one directly modifies the other at a point of significance of .01. It is on the basis of this conclusion that I will be attempting further studies into three areas.

The first will be a continuation of this study (probably using only version D because we now have demonstrated the relative functions of the two variables as significant, independant of each other and related to D). I will attempt to duplicate the work on the same student sample under the same conditions. I plan also to construct a similar series of tests for students at more junior and senior levels, using the structure of this passage, incorporating as many of its features of similarity within units in grammar, tense, voice, imagery and theme as possible. I will have to take into account matters of vocabulary and syntax development but several prototypes already exist. We are most anxious to begin work on a similar test for grades seven and eight as

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an indicator of language ability and control preparatory to guidance work for students entering high school. We have already begun work on a model for university admission which we find we have to write ourselves; Hardy still has sufficient popularity to be familiar to too many people.

The final area of investigation is that of our second "surprise". I wish to explore that important topic of subjects' dependance on "speaking" whatever they read and how it influences their understanding of a given passage.

Less theoretical are the potential applications of this work in classrooms. I have hinted throughout that the two phases of the test provide an accurate profile of individual students' levels of comprehension. This test correlates with individual student grades in grade eleven English significantly higher than the results from the comprehension section of the Gates-MacGinity test, so that, with the added advantage of providing illustrations of student strengths and error, this kind of testing has a reasonable claim as a diagnostic tool in a guidance office or a classroom, wherever a teacher requires an immediate assessment of a students' language capability. A liability inherent in the method is that retesting produces a confound once the test has been explained to a subject. The student will probably react in the second test to a preconception of poetic form which, if it is possible in the second instance, will have been arrived at by expectation and not insight, and, if it is not present probably will be forced, to the detriment of syntactical meaning.

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We had hoped originally to devise a method of testing which would be simple to mark and easily adaptable to different classroom situations. What I have outlined to-day is a relatively specialized test, requiring narrow standards of control, specific subjects and a half-hour explanation of methods of marking.

The method itself is simple and surprisingly accurate and merely involves a teacher selecting any representative passage from a course of study, stripping it of punctuation and spacing and offering it as an in-class exercise in reconstruction.

The time spent on devising a comprehensive punctuation and spacing mark scheme is more than recovered in the ability to have students do group marking with the added advantage of making studies in grammar a game of seeking possibilities in meaning. Individual student's problems appear as readily as in the standardized test and the entire exercise can be a valuable introduction to new writing styles and period studies in its forcing readers to come to terms with those linguistic devices which distinguish them. Another advantage, already being tried in our system, is the use of the method to determine students' abilities to comprehend assigned materials in new texts in a variety of courses including biology and history. The process is the same but the emphasis shifts from the student to the test. Stripped of punctuation and spacing, typical passages require comprehension for reconstruction. If the majority of a class are incapable of the process, the material should be reconsidered as being too advanced for that particular level.

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These, ladies and gentlemen, are our findings to date. I have intentionally refrained from drawing any conclusions about what they might indicate about teaching in the classroom, outside of the suggestions of the study itself. It should be evident that certain implications attach to the two graphs I have provided but I'll leave them for discussion.

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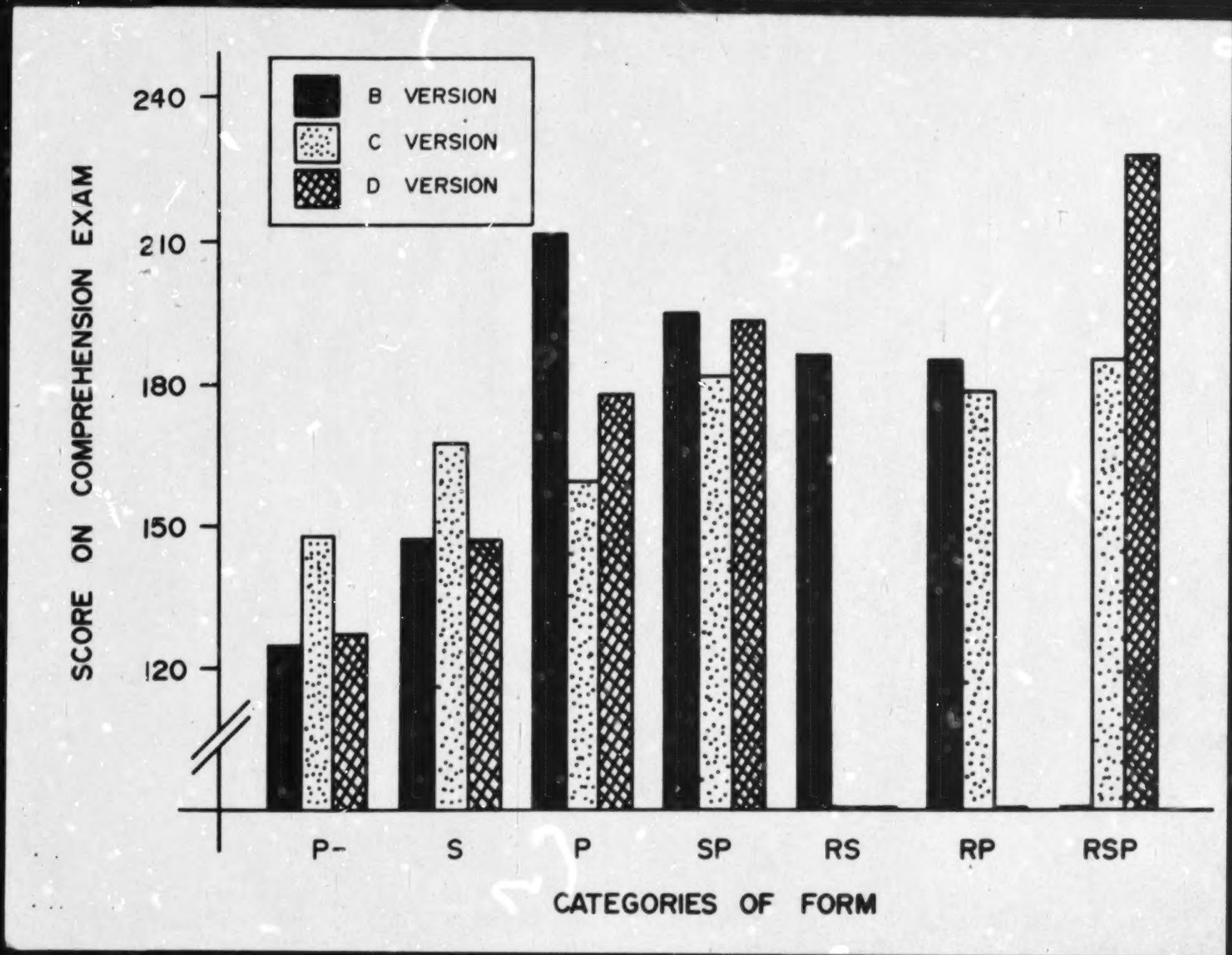
B VERSION
C VERSION
D VERSION
240
210
180
150
120
SCORE ON COMPREHENSION EXAM
P-
S
P
SP
RS
RP
RSP
CATEGORIES OF FORM

NAME _____

SECTION NUMBER _____

"D" version
Transcription

when the present has latched its back-gate behind my trembling stay and the may month flaps its glad green leaves like wings delicate-filmed as new-spun silk will the neighbours say he was a man who used to notice such things if it be in the dusk when like an eyelid's soundless blink the evening-hawk comes crossing the shades to alight upon the wind-warped upland thorn a gazer may think to him this must have been a familiar sight if I pass during some late night blackness mothy and warm when the hedgehog travels cautiously over the lawn one may say he worked that such innocent creatures should come to no harm but he could do little for them and now he is gone if when hearing that I have been stilled at last they stand at the door watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more he was one who had an eye for such mysteries and will any say when my bell of leaving is heard in the gloom and a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings till they rise again as they were a new bell's boom he hears it not now but used to notice such things

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Instructions: You will have 30 mintues to complete this exercise. Your instructor will inform you when to begin and when to finish. He will note each ten minute time period.

Please place your name and section number on both this sheet and the lined paper in which it is enclosed. You will be using both of these in a later section of the test.

Your revised version of this passage must be written as neatly as possible on the left page of the opened, lined sheet of paper.

Study the printed passage for approximately ten minutes, making whatever marks on the paper which help you in spacing and/or punctuating it so that its meaning is clear to you.

Write out on the lined paper your more complete version which has the most correct and complete punctuation and spacing you can find for the entire passage.

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D version

when the present has latched its back-gate behind my trembling stay and the may month flaps its glad green leaves like wings delicate-filmed as new-spun silk will the neighbours say he was a man who used to notice such things if it be in the dusk when like an eyelid's soundless blink the evening-hawk comes crossing the shades to alight upon the wind-warped upland thorn a gazer may think to him this must have been a familiar sight if I pass during some late night blackness mothy and warm when the hedgehog travels cautiously over the lawn one may say he worked that such innocent creatures should come to no harm but he could do little for them and now he is gone if when hearing that I have been stilled at last they stand at the door watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more he was one who had an eye for such mysteries and will any say when my bell of leaving is heard in the gloom and a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings till they rise again as they were a new bell's boom he hears it not now but used to notice such things

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"C" version
Transcription

When the present has latched its back-gate behind my trembling stay, and the May month flaps its glad green leaves like wings, delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the neighbours say, "He was a man who used to notice such things"? If it be in the dusk when, like an eyelid's soundless blink, the evening-hawk comes crossing the shades to alight upon the wind-warped upland thorn, a gazer may think, "To him this must have been a familiar sight." If I pass during some late night blackness, mothy and warm, when the hedgehog travels cautiously over the lawn, one may say, "He strove that such innocent creatures should come to no harm, but he could do little for them; and now he is gone." If, when hearing that I have been stilled at last, they stand at the door, watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees, will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more, "He was one who had an eye for such mysteries"? And will any say when my bell of leaving is heard in the gloom, and a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings, till they rise again, as they were a new bell's boom, "He hears it not now, but used to notice such things"?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"B" version
Transcription

when the present has latched its back-gate behind my trembling stay and the may month flaps its glad green leaves like wings delicate-filmed as new-spun silk will the neighbours say he was a man who used to notice such things

if it be in the dusk when like an eyelid's soundless blink the evening hawk comes crossing the shades to alight upon the wind-warped upland thorn a gazer may think to him this must have been a familiar sight

if I pass during some late night blackness mothy and warm when the hedgehog travels cautiously over the lawn one may say he worked that such innocent creatures should come to no harm but he could do little for them and now he is gone

if when hearing that I have been stilled at last they stand at the door watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more he was one who had an eye for such mysteries

and will any say when my bell of leaving is heard in the gloom and a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings till they rise again as they were a new bell's boom he hears it not now but used to notice such things

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

When the Present has latched its postern behind my tremulous stay,
And the May month flaps its glad green leaves like wings,
Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the neighbours say,
"He was a man who used to notice such things"?

If it be in the dusk when, like an eyelid's soundless blink,
The dewfall-hawk comes crossing the shades to alight
Upon the wind-warped upland thorn, a gazer may think,
"To him this must have been a familiar sight."

If I pass during some nocturnal blackness, mothy and warm,
When the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn,
One may say, "He strove that such innocent creatures should come to no harm,
But he could do little for them; and now he is gone."

If when hearing that I have been stilled at last, they stand at the door,
Watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees,
Will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more,
"He was one who had an eye for such mysteries"?

And will any say when my bell of quittance is heard in the gloom,
And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings,
Till they rise again, as they were a new bell's boom,
"He hears it not now, but used to notice such things"?

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NAME.....

DATE OF BIRTH (day, month, year).....

SEX (please circle) Male Female

SCHOOL..... YEAR LEVEL OF ENGLISH.....

ENGLISH TEACHER..... FOUR OR FIVE YEAR.....

FINAL GRADE IN ENGLISH COURSE.....

PARENT'S OR GUARDIAN'S OCCUPATION.....

INSTRUCTIONS

You have seven minutes to read over the passage in front of you. Use the time to understand the work to the best of your ability. You will be asked to answer a series of questions about the passage for thirty minutes immediately after your reading. Please raise your hand to summon the instructor if you do not understand the directions.

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SECTION A

Time for this passage: 8 minutes. Do not return to this work.

Select the best answer to the following questions: Circle one answer only.

1. The incidents described in the passage:
   have taken place
   will take place
   are taking place
   may take place

2. The speaker is speaking:
   in the past looking ahead
   in the future looking back
   in the present looking back
   in the present looking ahead

3. The speaker is:
   middle-aged
   of no definite age
   old
   young

4. The man who used to notice such things is:
   unrelated to the speaker
   a close friend
   the speaker
   the gazer

5. The people referred to in the passage are:
   friends of
   concerned for
   relatives of
   unaware of
   the speaker

6. The speaker:
   wonders about
   is sure of
   doubts
   cannot believe
   what others will say about him

7. The speaker is:
   superior to
   isolated from
   insignificant in
   uncaring about
   the natural world around him

8. The speaker observes nature:
   indifferently
   closely
   frequently
   carelessly

9. The speaker is:
   influential
   cautious
   lonely
   outgoing

10. The passage's theme is:
    fear of death
    conservation of nature
    man's insignificance
    aging

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SECTION B

8 MINUTES -- DO NOT RETURN TO THIS WORK!

Write your answers in the spaces below the questions.

1. Select all words and phrases which indicate seasons of the year. Which seasons are referred to?

2. Select all words and phrases which suggest times of day.

3. List all references to creatures.

4. List all references to vegetation.

5. Select the words which the speaker uses to name all the people who may think about him in the future.

6. Indicate where in the poem we learn that the speaker cannot influence or change the natural world around him.

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Cc

SECTION C

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

16 MINUTES

a) Answer all questions on the inside page of the white lined paper, opposite your written version of the passage. Number your answers.

b) Answer all questions as briefly as possible. Abbreviate all long quotations this way:

Example: The boy chased the dog and caught him in the field.
Your abbreviation: "The boy ... the field."

1. References to creatures and to kinds of vegetation indicate that the speaker observes nature closely but can do little to influence or change it. Select a brief quotation to demonstrate the above statement.

2. Death is not specifically mentioned, but is suggested. Copy out the narrator's references in the passage in which he describes his own death.

3. Indicate by brief quotations whether or not the speaker seems concerned about what others will think of him after his death.

4. List by copying the phrases the places where the speaker gives qualities to an object which the object does not actually possess.

5. The speaker considers the idea of his death several times in the passage. Each one of these statements contains some suggestion of time of day or season, a comment others may make about him and a natural setting or incident. In abbreviated quotations indicate where these sections begin and end in the passage.

When you have completed this section please sign all loose pages and enclose them in the lined sheet containing your written version of the passage.

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